

CLIFTON PLACE  
(The Home of Gideon J. Pillow)  
Near Columbia, Tennessee

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Tennessee

Historic American Buildings Survey  
J. Frazer Smith, District Officer  
W. Jeter Eason, Deputy District Officer  
404 Goodwyn Insti. Bldg., Memphis, Tenn.

"CLIFTON PLACE" (Residence and Farm Group)  
Near Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee.

Owner. William Ridley and sister, Mary Ridley (Occupants.)

Date of Erection. 1832.

Architect. Unknown.

Builder. General Gideon J. Pillow.

Present Condition. The residence proper is in excellent state of preservation being cared for intelligently and interestedly by the owner. With the exception of replacements, there have been no alterations or additions to the appearance of the house. Electric wiring, heating system and modern bath room have been installed. The out-buildings consisting of office, servants' dwellings, a brick granary, smoke house and ice house, and more distantly removed, the barns and slave dwellings (now tenants) are all well taken care of, and, with few and negligible exceptions, are just as they were when built.

Number of Stories. In residence proper - two living stories and cellar, one two story servants' dwelling immediately at rear. One story office to the left, facing the residence. All other servants' and slave quarters - one story, two large barns, each combination one and two stories.

Material of Construction. Foundation for the residence and other buildings stone, quarried on the place. Floors - hand hewn timber joists pine finished. Interior Trim - for residence, wild cherry cut from local forest. Residence proper, exterior and major interior walls, brick. Minor partitions - wood stud. Metal roof on main building, wood shingles originally on out-buildings, but now covered with metal.

Other Existing Records. Four photographs recorded in this record also recorded in "History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee" published for The Garden Study Club of Nashville by The Parthenon Press 1936.

Additional Data. Clifton Place is an excellent example of a farm mansion of the Ante Bellum days predominating the NATCHEZ TRACE DISTRICT. It is conspicuous by its imposing, though graceful, entrance feature, consisting of a projecting porch two stories high, with four Ionic columns supporting a pediment of the same order.

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At the second floor level a wood porch projects and is supported by the columns and enclosed by a cast iron rail between the columns. The plan of the house is typical inasmuch as the entrance is through a large center hall, the stairway of which is placed to the back along one wall and turning to form a landing beneath a window midway between the first and second floor. The house has the original furniture, mirrors, portraits, silver, and in some cases, chandeliers which have been wired for electricity, and wall paper in two of the rooms. It is beautifully furnished and well taken care of.

The building group sits back from the road about one eighth of a mile and is approached through a long avenue of trees. The drive passes about one hundred and fifty feet in front of the house and is separated from the yard by a wooden fence, the walk up to the house is lined with tree boxwood and the entrance porch is flanked on both sides by dwarf box, but which has grown to fairly good size. To the left of the house is the office, unused now, but built for the purpose of serving as plantation and slave office. To the back of the house are the living quarters of the personal servants and back of those, and extending about one fourth of a mile to the right, are the barns and slave quarters.

In keeping with the general tendency of the time, Clifton Place expresses the end to which all large farm estates strived in accentuating the functional character of the various buildings of the group. It was their intention to make the most important feature, which, of course, was the living quarters of the Master, the most outstanding part, and to further that accentuation every feature of the house, or of the group, as it went down the social usage went down also in size, quality of material and workmanship to the lowest order of building which was always the crudest in design and execution.

The only feature of Clifton Place which has not been kept up through the years is the garden. Originally there were three divisions making up the garden plot, having one central axis running through all three divisions consisting first of a garden of small magnolias, laurels, spruce, tree box and other shrubs in which the family could sit and be served. The next garden was given over to flowers, and the third was hot beds and vegetables.

The house was confiscated by the Union Troops during the War between the States, but was not damaged by them and was returned to the owners at the end of the war. The builder, General Gideon J. Pillow, was a Major General in the Mexican War and later was one of Tennessee's first Major Generals in the Civil War. At the death of General Pillow it passed into the hands of his widow and sub-

sequently into the hands of a son-in-law, Melville Williams, and later to Col. J.W.S. Ridley, grandfather of the present owner.

*W. Jeter Eason, 4 MCO*

DEPUTY DISTRICT OFFICER HABS

*Reviewed 4 MCO, July 1, 1936*